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Southern District of New York*

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**FOUR LEADERS OF VIOLENT ALBANIAN RACKETEERING  
ENTERPRISE SENTENCED TO BETWEEN 22  
AND 27 YEARS IN PRISON AND ORDERED TO FORFEIT  
\$5,755,000 AND FOUR PROPERTIES TO THE GOVERNMENT**

MICHAEL J. GARCIA, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, announced today that four leaders of a violent organized crime enterprise known as "The Corporation," identified during the course of the trial as the Rudaj Organization (after one of its leaders, ALEX RUDAJ), were sentenced today in Manhattan federal court by the Honorable Denise L. Cote.

Defendant ALEX RUDAJ, a/k/a "Sandro Rudovic," a/k/a "Uncle," a/k/a "Allie Boy," the leader of the Rudaj Organization, was sentenced to 27 years in prison and 5 years of supervised release. In addition, RUDAJ was ordered to forfeit to the Government his interest in two real properties in the Bronx, 625 Crescent Ave and 836 Morris Park Avenue, and one real property in Astoria, Queens, 33-16 23rd Avenue.

Defendant NARDINO COLOTTI, a/k/a "Lenny," was sentenced to 27 years in prison and 5 years of supervised release. COLOTTI was also ordered to forfeit to the Government his interest in 900 Morris Park Avenue in the Bronx.

Defendant NIKOLA DEDAJ, a/k/a "Big Nick," a/k/a "Nicky Nails," was sentenced to 26 years and 7 months in prison and 5

years of supervised release. Defendant PRENKA IVEZAJ, a/k/a "Frankie," a/k/a "Big Frank," was sentenced to 22 years in prison and 5 years of supervised release. Defendant ANGELO DIPIETRO, a/k/a "Fat Angelo," who was convicted at trial with the other defendants, will be sentenced by Judge Cote on June 30, 2006. Defendant LJUSA NUCULOVIC, a/k/a "Louie," who was also convicted at trial with the other defendants, will be sentenced by Judge Cote in a proceeding not yet scheduled.

In January 2006, RUDAJ, COLOTTI, DEDAJ, IVEZAJ, NUCULOVIC, and DIPIETRO were found guilty after a 14-week jury trial in Manhattan federal court of numerous violent offenses. Specifically, the defendants were convicted of racketeering offenses ("RICO"), extortion, conspiracy to commit extortion, firearms offenses, loansharking, extortionate debt collection, conspiracy to use extortionate means to collect extensions of credit, and operation of a large-scale illegal gambling business. Defendant RUDAJ was also convicted of bank fraud.

The evidence at trial established that the Rudaj Organization was an organized crime syndicate comprised of dozens of members and associates that worked with and rivaled the traditional Italian mafia families in the New York area. The Rudaj Organization operated a massive network of illegal gambling parlors, gambling machines devoted to illegal gambling activities, and bookmaking operations. The evidence showed that the Rudaj Organization was founded in the early 1990s by ALEX RUDAJ, a/k/a "Sandro Rudovic," a/k/a "Uncle," a/k/a "Allie Boy," and NARDINO COLOTTI, a/k/a "Lenny," former associates of the Gambino Crime Family. Throughout the 1990s, according to the evidence at trial, the Rudaj Organization seized and exercised control over illegal gambling operations in the Morris Park and Arthur Avenue areas of the Bronx, and in Westchester County.

In June 2001, the evidence at trial established, the Rudaj Organization violently seized control over illegal gambling operations in Astoria, Queens - territory which formerly had been controlled by the Lucchese Organized Crime Family. In connection with their takeover, five of the defendants and other members of the group severely beat a member of the Astoria gambling community to send the message that the Rudaj Organization was now in control of illegal gambling in Astoria. Similarly, the trial evidence demonstrated that in August 2001, the six defendants and numerous other members and associates of the Rudaj Organization, armed with firearms, stormed a rival gambling establishment opened by a Gambino Family associate and shut it down. The evidence also established that the Rudaj Organization committed numerous other acts of violence and intimidation to maintain and expand their control of illegal gambling in Astoria and in the Bronx.

The evidence at trial proved that defendants ALEX RUDAJ, NARDINO COLOTTI, and NIKOLA DEDAJ, a/k/a "Big Nick," a/k/a "Nicky Nails," were the primary leaders of the Rudaj Organization, and were responsible for, among other things, supervising the criminal activities of the other members of the Rudaj Organization, and resolving disputes with other organized criminal groups in the New York City area. Specifically, when disputes arose between the Rudaj Organization and other criminal enterprises in the New York City area, including the Italian mafia families, the leaders of the Rudaj Organization would resolve these disputes, if necessary, by using threats of violence and actual violence against the members and associates of those other criminal groups.

The evidence at trial further established that defendants PRENKA IVEZAJ, a/k/a "Frankie," a/k/a "Big Frank," LJUSA NUCULOVIC, a/k/a "Louie," and ANGELO DIPIETRO, a/k/a "Fat Angelo," were high-ranking members of the Rudaj Organization and participated in its criminal affairs, including extortions, loansharking and extortionate debt collection, and running its illegal gambling enterprise. Defendant NUCULOVIC acted as the Rudaj Organization's boss of gambling operations in Astoria, Queens, from 2001 until 2004. In those instances in which the Rudaj Organization resorted to violence, the evidence at trial showed that the members and associates of the Rudaj Organization frequently carried and brandished firearms.

All of the sentenced defendants have been detained at the Metropolitan Correctional Center since their arrests on October 26, 2004. ALEX RUDAJ, 38, formerly lived in Yorktown Heights, New York. NARDINO COLOTTI, 44, formerly lived in the Bronx, New York. NIKOLA DEDAJ, 42, formerly lived in Yonkers, New York. PRENKA IVEZAJ, 41, formerly lived in Queens, New York.

Mr. GARCIA praised the efforts of the FBI and of the Westchester County District Attorney's Office in the investigation and prosecution of these crimes.

Assistant United States Attorneys TIMOTHY J. TREANOR, JENNIFER G. RODGERS, and BENJAMIN GRUENSTEIN are in charge of the prosecution.

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